

responsibility of ensuring quality of export products rather than depending upon EIA inspection, the machinery for enforcement of compulsory Quality Control and Pre-shipment Inspection has been simplified and streamlined.

(c) The major advantage arising from WTO Membership is the automatic entitlement of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment to its Members implying thereby that the members cannot discriminate among various WTO Members not only in their tariff regimes but also in respect of various other rules, regulations, incentives etc. affecting the trade. If India were not to be a member of WTO, India would have had to separately negotiate bilaterally with all Members for obtaining such an MFN treatment. The agreement also ensures 'national treatment' for our exports so that our goods cannot be discriminated vis-a-vis domestic products of the importing country once they enter foreign markets. Another important benefit accruing is the availability of a strong and effective Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) under the WTO. WTO provides a rule based predictable multilateral trading system which protects the member countries from the pressures of their strong trading partners.

Crisis in Assam Tea Industry due to import of tea

4131. **SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Assam Tea Industry is passing through a rough weather;

(b) if so, the total quantity of tea imported with its value during the current year, country-wise;

(c) the total demand and supply of tea in the country during each of the last three years;

(d) the total quantity of tea exported during the above period and foreign exchange earned therefrom, country-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to curb the excessive import of tea in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

[24 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Tea industry in the country including Assam is facing problem of low prices since the beginning of 2000. However, the decline in the Assam tea prices is not to the extent as in the case of teas of other regions in India as is evident from the following:—

(in Rs/kg.)

Year	Assam Tea	North India Tea	South India Tea	All India Tea
2001(Jan. & Feb.)	81.25	79.75	52.37	71.16
2000	72.83	70.42	44.80	61.96
1999	82.04	80.62	57.10	72.83
1998	80.34	80.24	68.86	76.43

(b) Total quantity of tea imported alongwith value during the year 2000-01, country-wise is as under:

Country	Import (April, 2000—Feb. 2001)	
	Quantity in mn. kgs.	Value in Rs. crores
Belgium	0.41	3.21
U.A.E.	0.32	0.91
Iran	0.56	1.78
Sri Lanka	1.57	15.05
Indonesia	5.43	32.17
Vietnam	2.63	13.39
Turkey	0.41	1.43
Kenya	1.19	12.09
South Africa	0.14	0.71
Others	0.40	3.28
TOTAL:	13.06	84.02

(c) Total production and estimated domestic consumption of tea in India during the last three years is given below:—

(in mn. kgs)

Year	Production of Tea (Supply)	Estimated domestic demand for consumption
1997-98	834.88	602
1998-99	850.25	620
1999-2000	816.06	638

(d) Export of tea from India during the last three years country-wise is as under:—

(Quantity in mn. kgs)

(Value in Rs. crores)

Country	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000	
	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
Russian Federation	92.20	864.70	82.17	814.36	95.93	801.20
Kazakhstan	4.48	43.90	7.87	82.77	6.75	72.19
Ukraine	0.39	3.67	1.35	14.18	0.74	8.74
U.K.	26.97	237.98	21.03	222.63	17.71	197.70
Ireland	2.59	21.71	3.03	30.55	3.00	32.02
Netherlands	2.83	35.26	1.77	29.09	2.37	37.05
Germany	5.55	89.37	5.12	109.06	5.20	110.34
France	0.29	5.03	0.25	5.90	0.70	4.85
Poland	10.10	92.10	9.73	81.83	10.28	74.64
U.S.A.	5.46	66.72	4.61	66.49	7.75	107.82
Canada	0.76	5.80	0.87	10.39	0.76	7.48
A.R.E.	5.74	40.20	5.31	40.61	0.52	4.33
Libya	1.65	5.98	6.97	76.54	1.40	9.63
Iran	1.62	12.86	4.21	42.76	1.14	12.79
UAE	23.65	216.76	20.00	209.13	19.12	219.00
Iraq	2.41	18.18	10.26	97.53	6.32	46.19
Saudi Arab	3.46	41.56	3.45	49.15	3.66	49.97
Turkey	1.83	18.10	2.93	34.88	1.03	8.83

[24 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(Quantity in mn. kgs)
(Value in Rs. crores)

Country	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000	
	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
Japan	3.40	53.11	2.96	60.33	2.50	49.42
Sri Lanka	1.97	13.46	0.97	9.02	0.74	7.09
Australia	0.71	4.73	1.01	9.64	0.93	9.77
Others	3.20	111.97	9.99	95.00	3.76	51.38
TOTAL:	211.26	203.15	205.86	2191.84	192.31	1922.43
TOTAL: (in Mn. US\$)	—	539.00	—	520.88	—	427.46

(e) In order to restrict large scale import of tea into India, Government has already increased the basic customs duty from 35% to 70%. Steps are also being taken to impose some non-tariff measures like minimum quality standards.

Strengthening SEZs and EPZs

4132. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any ambitious plan to strengthen the SEZs, EPZs and EIPs to achieve export growth more than the national average;